

Christ Episcopal Church, Red Wing, Minnesota

The Caller

Bishop

The Right Rev. Craig Loya

Priest-in-Charge

The Rev. Letha Wilson-Barnard
priest@christchurchrw.org
651-327-2242

Music Director

John Albright
albright303@hotmail.com

Diaconal Candidate/Youth Director

Vicki Lambert
lamfam6npets@msn.com

Sunday School Director

Heather Flueger-Whalen
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Christ Church Vestry

Sr. Warden: Charlie Brown
Jr. Warden: Kris Blaney
Sandy Richter (2023)
Pam Dressen (2023)
Zoe Malinchoc-DeVoe (2024)
Hugh Wronski (2024)
Elaine Hoisington (2025)
Erik Prink (2025)

Treasurers

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Dress Yourself in Love, Let the Journey Begin

It was three years ago, on December 2, 2019, that I became your Priest-in-Charge. My heart went out to you, hearing from the diocese about the abrupt termination of your previous priest, so I knew what I was stepping into. We pulled off Christmas 2019 together, and then I had just 11 weeks with you before we were forced into lock-down because of the pandemic. And remember, we all hoped we would be back inside the church in a few weeks for Holy Week? We couldn't imagine what was ahead of us.

We took a crash, hands-on course in using Zoom, with the help of Randy Johnson. Many of us began showing up for services and meetings and prayer on our computers, reminiscent of "Hollywood Squares." While some of our elders became experts on joining these on-line gatherings via their telephones. We did that for over a year. Except for the first couple months, Debora Gilson, our faithful administrator, continued working from the office, keeping communication circulating between us.

During the warmer months, we ventured outside and met on lawns and patios for pastoral visits and short communion services with small, plastic communion sets. We met for fellowship on a fall day, with lawn chairs in tow, just to lay eyes on one another and chat, all the while socially distancing and wearing masks. In February 2021, after our January on-line annual meeting, we gathered outside on the front lawn, for a short

follow-up, in-person meeting with a quorum, to ratify the votes taken via Zoom. We got creative: distributing Christmas and Easter flowers, with communion kits to our elders, along with making monthly phone calls; giving ashes to people in their cars; and doing outdoor baptisms. One of the more memorable experiments, for me, was the 15-minute, live Christmas Eve service in frigid temps, on the snow-covered front lawn, with 35 people in attendance holding candles and singing Silent Night.



I've loved you all and loved serving as your priest for these three years. You are wonderful group of people, committed to your church, one another, and your community; and you are gifted and resilient.

Then in the fall of 2020, we started recording services inside the church, three at a time, to reduce exposure, with a small leadership team, including technicians, our contract organist at the time, John Albright, clergy and a few choir members leading singing. We recorded three services at a time, so the worship team wasn't put risk of being exposed to COVID more frequently. Then it was on Pentecost 2021,

that we finally came back together inside the church for a 10 a.m. Sunday service. It wasn't completely back to normal, but it was wonderful to be together in person.

Folks, we made it through the worst of it, though the pandemic's death toll was far too high in the U.S. and around the world, and COVID is still with us. But the vaccines and boosters, help to mitigate the risk. And through all of this many of us realized how much family, and friends, and church means to us. We realized we missed receiving communion and the simple joy of sharing a cup of coffee and catching up.

I encourage you to continue to turn outward to the community. You're already doing this in many ways, including the Coat Shed, the Prayer Wall, and participating in Hope and Harbor.

When we were finally back together, we began to wrestle with the painful issues of Christ Church's history of clergy misconduct with the help of our healing task force, a consultant, Robin Hammeal-Urban, and our bishop, The Right Rev. Craig Loya. We may not have navigated it all perfectly, but my hope is that we created space for people to ask questions, tell the truth, and listen to others' perspective, hopefully building greater empathy for and trust in one another. And my hope for you, going forward, is that there continues to be room for open discussion, healing, and greater

clarity about what you can expect from clergy serving with you.

I've loved you all and loved serving as your priest for these three years. You are wonderful group of people, committed to your church, one another, and your community; and you are gifted and resilient. God is with you and you have all that you need. I believe you are in a good place to begin your next phase of ministry, and I trust that the Holy Spirit is and will continue to guide your steps. You have a committed vestry, including younger members stepping up to take responsibility: please support them. You have a skilled and experienced search committee. And you have Vicki Lambert, a dedicated leader, and soon to be ordained deacon.

I encourage you to continue to turn outward to the community. You're already doing this in many ways, including the Coat Shed, the Prayer Wall, and participating in Hope and Harbor, etc. Continue to open the doors and share this beautiful facility with the community for meetings, events, and services. Most of all, I encourage you to accept the invitation of our Bishop to deepen your roots as followers of Jesus: committing to daily prayer, scripture reading, walking with the poor and marginalized, and forming small groups where you share your lives and faith together. You will continue to be in my heart and in my prayers. Thank you for the privilege of serving with you. Blessings and peace, Letha

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your path." Proverbs 3:5-6



While Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the actual date of the big event is lost to history. There's [no mention of December 25](#) in the Bible and many historians say Jesus was most likely born in the spring. Some historians posit the date was originally chosen because it coincided with the pagan festival of Saturnalia, which honored the agricultural god Saturn with celebrating and gift-giving.

Poinsettias for Christmas Services

Poinsettias will be for sale this year. They will be \$14 per plant. Please call the office or sign up on the bulletin board. Please make sure your sentiment is written legibly. ;-)



Prayer Wall on Third Street



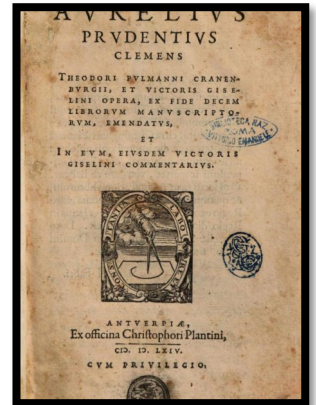
From your Faithful Innovation Team:

Have you noticed the new addition to our church lawn on Third Street?

There is now a prayer wall, which was put up for the Holiday Stroll and will stay there for the Advent Season.

The community is invited to hang up a ribbon and say a prayer.

Interactions with people using it have been very moving and positive. A big thank you to Matt Shefelund for its construction and placement and to Angela Shefelund for the poster, ribbons, and making it happen.



Christians may have grown up learning that we give gifts at Christmas to mimic the presents the Three Wise Men brought the baby Jesus. But like so many other traditions, that also has its roots in Saturnalia. The pagans originally gave offerings to the gods, too.

The New Coat Shed

It took a village.

There have been many people involved in making the coat shed possible. The idea for the shed came from Barbara von Haaren. After sharing her vision with the Community Engagement Team, the first shed was purchased and installed. The success of the shed led to the planning of a new, larger shed that could be better organized and hold more clothing. Building plans were drawn up, then funding was sought. Vicki Lambert served as the central communication point between the builder, Ken Dicke from Habitat for Humanity and Clair Concrete, who poured the slab and donated the cross imprint in front the shed. Calvin and Jodi Weiss donated the cost of the concrete. Other individuals have also donated funds and time. Ken Christianson and Mike Stelton have served faithfully as our shed managers, sorting, removing, and

resupplying coats and other warm weather clothing three days a week or more.

The shed has been a vast success! It took a community and we are thankful.



Compassion by Vicki Jo Lambert

What suffocates you? What are you like when you're uncomfortable, hurting, tired, abandoned? Are you compassionate when you are in a bad place? When we think about it, we are usually not very nice when we are feeling pressured.

I invite you to think about Jesus' last moments of being alive. He chose to respond to the two men on the crosses next to him, *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."* (Luke 23:43)

Friends, who is the "you" Jesus is referencing? Who exactly is Jesus talking to? Is it possible that Jesus was speaking to not one but both?

In considering that Jesus invited both men with him into paradise, we come to realize that Jesus died for the sins and selfishness of everyone. Jesus did not rebuke the first man who told him to *"save himself and us"*. No, Jesus chose to respond with *"you will be with me in heaven."*

It is helpful to think forward to Colossians 1:13. *God has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of God's beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

When we are honest, we can admit that we are not always compassionate toward others or ourselves. We don't believe that other people deserve mercy. We want to be the judge, and not let God decide. Once we actually face that, then we can start having compassion toward the other person and forgiving ourself. At this moment, we begin to work toward becoming truly, genuinely compassionate.

When someone is behaving in a way that we don't agree with, what can we do? First, don't judge. That's God's job. Second, take a breath. Next, I suggest you



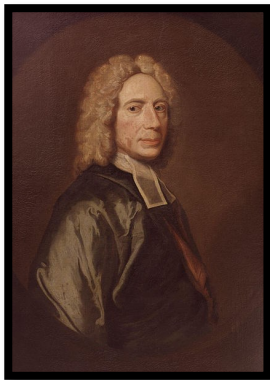
offer sincere kindness, compassion, and listening because you might just learn something.

When we seek to find common ground with real understanding rather than selfishly insisting on our way, we move toward *sharing in the inheritance of the saints in the light.* (Col 1:12)

I offer you a couple of contrasting examples of how to learn to be more compassionate:

You might want to say: *Get over it.* How about saying: *You've survived hardships before, I believe in you.* Or you might want to say: *Suck it up!* Instead, respond with: *It's ok to feel sad and let it out. I am here with you.* AND/OR you want to say: *Things aren't that bad.* Instead, respond with: *Are you okay? Is there anything I can do to help?* And really mean it!

Remember, Jesus does not destroy, scatter, and divide. Rather, our Jesus heals, repairs, gathers, and unites everyone and everything. Follow Jesus. Don't judge and speak harshly when someone irritates you. Do the opposite. Be kind. In this way, Christ is the King - not just on Sunday, but every day.



The tradition of [Christmas trees](#) goes all the way back to the ancient Egyptians and Romans, who decorated using evergreens during the winter solstice to signify that [spring would return](#). So if you deck your halls with a green tree, wreaths or evergreen garland, you're honoring history.

Third Fridays at Church are a Thing!



This month we are going to be embracing DIY crafts for the holidays. Everyone will find something they enjoy.

Make gifts.
Bake cookies.

Enjoy time together with a variety of craft stations, yummy cookies to share, and, as always, a meal together.

Contact Vicki to offer a station or ask a question.

Friday, December 16, 5:30pm



Brew a cup o' tea when trimming your tree this year to pay homage to its origins. When Prince Albert of Germany got a tree for his new wife, Queen Victoria of England, the tradition really took off across the pond. A drawing of the couple in front of a Christmas first tree appeared in [*Illustrated London News*](#) in 1848. To use modern parlance, the idea went viral.

A Blue Christmas Service

Also known as a Longest Night Service

What does Christmas mean to you? Is it all sweet, joyous, gifts, and rest? OR is it something you are not looking forward to? Are you feeling the loss of a loved one or something else? Are you feeling blue this season?

Please consider coming together for a reflection on how love lives inside us, even when we are blue and struggling. On December 21, we will offer a special service for those of us who have feelings of isolation, loneliness, or just plain exhaustion during this season.

**Wednesday, December 21, at 5:30pm
- Blue Christmas worship.**

Merciful God,
In this season of rejoicing, we come to you weary and grieving
In this season of feasting, we hunger for healing and relief
In this season of light, our hearts are veiled in sorrow and shadow

Will this season ever end?
“Yes.” We hear your, “Yes.”

Those who are weary will find rest
Those who mourn will be comforted
Those who hunger will be filled

The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness will not overcome it.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

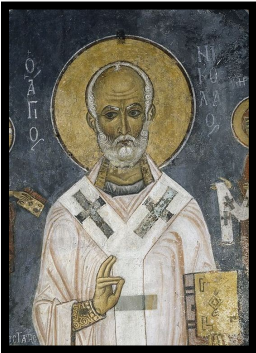
Birthdays

6 Heidi Befort
 8 Heather Flueger
 Kris Blaney
 13 Gretchen Lee
 John Blue
 15 Fred Pardhun
 17 Jared Fanslow
 22 Ellie Kelly

24 Peggy Danielson
 26 Sorin James Knutson
 30 Judy Mann

Anniversaries

11 Kris and Sharon Hager
 14 Linda McNairy (Phil)
 17 Barney Flueger (Mary)



You probably already knew that the idea of Santa Claus came from [St. Nicholas](#). The saint wasn't really a bearded man who wore a red suit; that look came much later. In the fourth century, the Christian bishop gave away his large inheritance to the poor and [rescued women](#) from servitude. In Dutch, his name is Sinter Klaas, which later morphed into Santa Claus in English.

Altar Flowers for December

December 4 Chapel In memory O. H. Norgaard

Joan Norgaard

Church In memory of Robert Grosse and Lorraine Grosse

Jerry, Bev, Matt and Cody Stevens

December 11 Chapel In memory of Lucy Falls from her family

Jotsie Johnson

Church In loving memory of sister Kathy Bryan and my loving husband, Peter

Barbara von Haaren

December 18 Chapel In memory of Evelyn Foot, first wife of E. H. Foot

Foot Memorial Fund

Church In thanksgiving for children and grandchildren:

**Tom & Sarah, Madlyn, Paige, Graham & Kiristen,
 Ella, Logan & Nora**

Scott and Peggy Danielson

December 25 Poinsettias see Christmas service bulletin

Roses on the altar are in memory of Greg Hoff, Richard Schotta, Jeanette Schotta & Cliff Simonson given by Suzanne Simonson and Emily Hoff

Schotta Memorial Fund

Thank You From the Junior Guild

The Junior Guild would like to thank everyone who donated items to the All Church Bake Sale and Bazaar.

Also, thank you for shopping. It was a successful day, even though the pecans didn't arrive on time.

December 2022 Calendar and Scheduled Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4 First Sunday Potluck <i>Rite II</i> 8 am <i>Rite II</i> 10 am Music	5 Junior Guild 12 noon Youth Group 4:30 pm	6	7 Chapel Service 10 am Hospitality 5:30 pm Choir 6:30 pm	8 Suicide Prevention Group 7 pm	9 Vicki Lambert Diaconal Ordination 6 pm	10 Community Engagement 10:30 am
11 <i>Rite II</i> 8 am Celebration of Retirements and Ordination of Vicki. <i>Rite II</i> 10 am Music	12	13 Property 5:30 pm	14 Chapel Service 10 am Choir 6:30 pm	15 MOPS 6:30 pm	16 Fun Night for All 5:30 pm	17
18 <i>Rite II</i> 8:00 am Christian Conv. 9 am <i>Rite II</i> 10 am Music	19 Vestry-5pm Youth Group 4:30 pm	20 Altar Guild 4:45pm	21 Chapel Service 10 am Choir 6:30 pm	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 5 pm Service 11 pm Service <i>Hope and Harbor</i>
25 Christmas Day <i>Rite II</i> 10 am Music <i>Hope and Harbor</i>	26 Hope and Harbor	27 Hope and Harbor	28 Chapel Service 10 am Choir 6:30pm <i>Hope and Harbor</i>	29 <i>Hope and Harbor</i>	30 <i>Hope and Harbor</i>	31 New Years Eve <i>Hope and Harbor</i>

First Sunday Potluck: Dec. 4 after 10 am service
Music by Tony Cuchetti.

Choir Rehearsal: Dec. 7, 14, 21, & 28—6:30 pm

Junior Guild: Dec. 5—12 noon

Hospitality Committee: Dec. 7—5:30 pm

Youth Group: Dec. 5 & 19—4:30 pm

Community Engagement: Dec. 10—10:30 am

Vestry: Dec. 19— 5:00 pm

Fun for All Night: Dec. 16 —5:30 pm

Altar Guild: Dec. 20—4:45 pm

Property Committee: Nov. 15 —5:30 pm

Mark Your Calendars!

Vicki Jo Lambert's diaconal ordination will be on Dec. 9 at St. Mark's Cathedral in Minneapolis, 6pm.

Celebration between services on December 11 to mark the time Rev. Letha and Debora have spent at Christ Church and to honor the ordination of Vicki Lambert:
December 11, 9:00 am

Blue Christmas Service: December 21, 5:30 pm

Christmas Eve Service: December 24, 5:00 pm and 11 pm

Christmas Morning Service: December 25, 10 am

Up Coming Events

- December 4th, First Sunday, with guest musician, Tony Cuchetti, at our 10 a.m. service, with a potluck to follow.
- December 9th, Friday, 6 p.m., Vicki Lambert's Diaconal Ordination at St. Mark's Cathedral, Minneapolis. If you want to ride the coach bus, leaving Christ Church at 3:45 p.m., sign up on the bulletin board. Fee is \$20 per person.
- December 11th, Sunday, after both the 8 & 10 a.m. service, we'll have pie and coffee to congratulate Vicki on her ordination and to say good-bye to Debora, our administrator of six years, and Letha, our Priest-in-Charge. If you can bring a pie, please let Kris Blaney know: klblaney14@gmail.com
- December 16th, Friday Fun Night, Decorate Christmas Cookies and Crafts, 5:30-8 p.m.
- December 19, 5-7 p.m. Vestry Meeting
- December 21, 5:30 p.m. Blue Christmas
- December 24, 5 & 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Services
- December 25, 10 a.m. Only one service.
- December 24-January 7, Christ Church hosts Hope and Harbor. Volunteers needed for evening registration and hospitality, plus a hot meal each evening. Sign up online at <http://www.rwhopeandharbor.com>
- December 25 12:00 p.m. Christmas Dinner and 1-5:45 Open House for Hope & Harbor Guests. Letha will be hosting this Christmas dinner. If you would like to help serve or contribute a dish to share, please sign up on the bulletin board.



Contrary to popular belief, "Xmas" is not a trendy attempt to take Christ out of Christmas. According to *From Adam's Apple to Xmas: An Essential Vocabulary Guide for the Politically Correct*, "Christianity" was spelled "Xianity" as far back as 1100. X, or Chi, is the Greek first letter of "Christ" and served as a symbolic stand-in at the time. In 1551, the holiday was commonly called "Xtemmas," which was later shortened to "Xmas."

Community Engagement Team Notes

Here's the latest on our community's needs. Please contribute as you are able.

- Coat Shed: Needs men's coats, gloves, and socks.
- Red Wing Area Food Shelf: Lots of donations in November. Let's keep it up!
- Hope Coalition: Needs baby wipes, gloves, hats, size 4 diapers, shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream and razors.

- Minneapolis Veteran's Hospital: Homeless vets need new underwear, t-shirts, warm socks, long underwear, sweatpants and sweatshirts for both men and women in all sizes. Tags need to be kept on.
- A couple of bins next to the Food Shelf ones in the Parish Hall entryway have been relabeled for Hope Coalition and Homeless Vets.

Thanks for your donations!
Pat and Mike Martin

Vestry News!

The Vestry has many irons in the fire right now, here are a few things we are working on.

- **Priest search** - the search committee is working with the Diocese on finding a permanent priest for when Letha retires. The Vestry is handling the search for an interim priest. This priest will fill in while we find a permanent placement. We are waiting on candidates from the Diocese. We will give you an update as soon as we have one.
- **Debora's retirement** - after 6 years, Debora will be retiring as our gatekeeper/administrative assistant. Her last day will be Dec 30. We thank her for everything she has done for our church. We are in the search for her replacement. If you know anyone who would be interested, have them reach out to Catherine Johnson, Kris Blaney, or Charlie Brown.

- **Pledge cards** - if you have not turned in your pledge cards yet, please do so as soon as you can. We are at about halfway to our target so THANK YOU! If you need a pledge card, you can pick one up in the office.
- **1st Sunday Potluck** - Please join us this Sunday for some music by Tony Cuchetti and a potluck. Bring your pledge cards :)
- **We have two spots open for Vestry starting January 1**, including the Senior Warden position. Charlie Brown has offered to fill in as Sr. Warden one more year in the event we don't have a volunteer. If you are looking for a way to learn about how the church operates and contribute your unique skills, please see any current Vestry member for more details.



Before Coca-Cola decided to use his image for advertising, Santa's looks tended more toward spooky than jolly. Then, in 1931, the beverage company hired an illustrator named Haddon Sundblom to depict the jolly old elf for magazine ads. Now, kids see visions of sugarplums instead of having Santa-themed nightmares.

Outside the church during the Holiday Stroll open house. We had over 300 people come into the church, have cookies, some cider and/or sing Christmas Carols. It was a success and a lovely evening!

See you on Sunday,
Kris Blaney
Junior Warden

